(b) if so, in what way Government propose to change the present education system alongwith the outline thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) (to (c) The Government has always accorded importance to employment oriented system of education. While elaborating on essence and role of Education, the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 has recognized that Education develops manpower for different levels of the Economy.

The NPE 1986 also envisages the introduction of systematic, well-planned and rigorously implemented programmes of vocational education. These elements are meant to develop a healthy attitude amongst students towards work and life, to enhance individual employability, to reduce the mis-match between the demand and supply of skilled manpower, and to provide and alternative for those intending to pursue higher education without particular interest or purpose. The policy envisages that efforts will be made to provide children at the higher secondary level with generic vocational courses which cut across several occupational fields and which are not occupation specific.

The National Policy on Education also envisages the delinking of degrees from jobs in selected areas. Delinking is to be applied in services for which university degree need not be a necessary qualification.

However, Government is not in favour of excessive emphasis on skills, employment and corporate oriented education at the cost of Basic Sciences and Humanities which is fundamental to our all round development, material and spiritual.

Criteria for literacy

†1367. DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether mere knowledge of alphabets has been recognized as criteria in the Constitution for terming someone as literate;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) whether Government propose to put forth a new definition of literacy while changing the said criteria;

(c) whether Government propose to bring a bill in this regard; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIM D. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) There is no provision in the Cosntitution of India for terming someone as literate.

(b) to (d) The National Literacy Mission has defined the desired level of competencies in respect of reading, writing and numeracy, which is required for a person to be literate. As these competencies have been found to be adequate, there is no proposal to revise the same.

Scaling up of higher education fees

1368. SHRI P. R. RAJAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Planning Commission has recommended scaling up of higher education fees; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and his Ministry's reaction to the commission's suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (b) In the Mid Term Appraisal of Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-2007) of the Planning Commission mentions the enhancement of fees in universities, "along with substantial increase in public funding, in order to meet the demands of increased access/enrolment and quality improvement." The Mid Term Appraisal also suggests that "substantial increase in fees combined with, an aggressive means-based scholarship and loan programme, is urgently needed to improve the resource position of universities and colleges." The Ministry has already accepted the recommendation of the report of the CABE Committee on "Financing of Higher and Technical Education" that "revenue generation through student fees beyond 20 per cent may seriously affect access to higher education."